INNOVATION™
the MAZE AGENCY®
8
1st INNOVATION ISSUE!
BAR & GRILL
HUGHES · MAWAR 1-88

the MAZE AGENCY®

...So there I was, quite a few kilometers from any comics shop.

Okay, maybe once every five or so weeks I'd get to a shop in Washington, PA, or in Pittsburgh -- and one of the few books I actually felt strongly enough about to *buy* was *The Maze Agency* series published by Comico.

That means it had to be something special.

Y'see, every day I see stories and art for the various Innovation titles; I see submissions from newcomers and professionals alike; I see occasional freebies from publishers gracious enough to share trades with us; and I see the comics on display when I make it to the comics shops or the conventions.

I thumb through a lot of material at the shops -- but very little of it is well-drawn, well-designed, well-*written* enough to make me spend money on it.

Okay, there's *Concrete*. There's *Xenozoic Tales*. There's *Black Orchid* and an occasional escapade into something with a flash of brilliant art.

And there's *The Maze Agency*.

I remember my first exposure to it, at Chicago Con in 1988, shortly before Innovation officially opened its doors. Here it was, several months before *The Maze Agency* was to premiere in comics shops, and Comico was showing photocopies of pencils of its first several issues. Penciller Adam Hughes was brilliant! At the time he was more illustrator than storyteller, but his pages were a joy to behold.

We talked about *The MAZE Agency*. And we talked about the planned Innovation title, ***LEGENDS OF THE STARGRAZERS***. In the months to come, we didn't stop talking; ultimately, Adam would do covers for the run of ***STARGRAZERS***, as well as for ***HERO ALLIANCE*** and our upcoming ***SCANDALS*** special project!

Yes, *The MAZE Agency* came out, and I was thrilled with this Mike Barr creation -- with the good, fair-play detective stories, with the characterizations, with the sophisticated, sexy relationship between Jennifer Mays and Gabriel Webb...and, of course, with the art.

It was the kind of book I'd buy, no matter who was publishing it. More important, it was a book I wished *we* were publishing.

Now, after a series of circumstances and complexities that would take even Jennifer and Gabe nearly an hour to figure out, we *are* publishing it.

And we're planning a celebration -- by teaming our delightful detectives with *Ellery Queen*, next month! We've a big, beautiful ***MAZE SPECIAL*** and a ***MAZE*** trade book in the works, as well.

It's a perfect book for the Innovation line, which is moving ever farther away from "standard" comics and toward comics that I *want* to do -- such as ***Anne Rice's THE VAMPIRE LESTAT*** (12 painted full-color bi-monthly issues, $2.50 each); ***CYBERPUNK*** (2 painted full-color issues, $1.95 each), or the trade edition (at $6.95); and ***SHERLOCK HOLMES: A STUDY IN SCARLET*** ($5.95 charcoal-and-wash trade paperback).

All are available by mail *if* they're not available in your local shops.

Welcome, Mike and Adam and Rick and Jennifer and Gabe. We'd like to think that, had we been around a year earlier, you would've opened your classy detective agency right here, in the first place!

Thanks for coming.

-- David Campiti
September, 1989

THE MAZE AGENCY®
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the MAZE AGENCY®

A NEW LEASE ON DEATH

MIKE W. BARR
landlord

ADAM HUGHES & RICK MAGYAR
architects

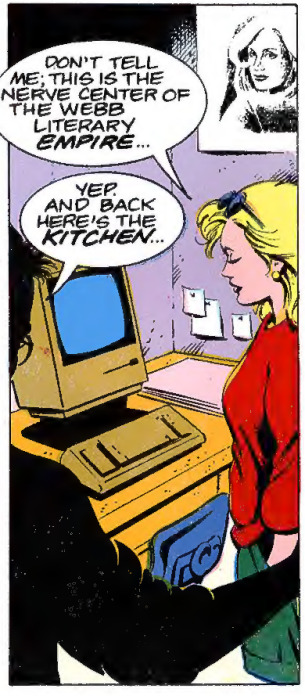
MICHAEL EURY
superintendent

DEBORAH MARKS
draftsman

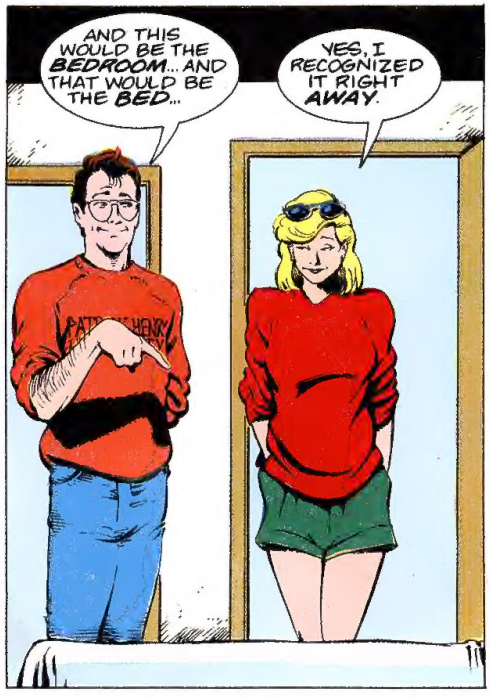
CAROL & KEVIN VAN HOOK
interior decorators

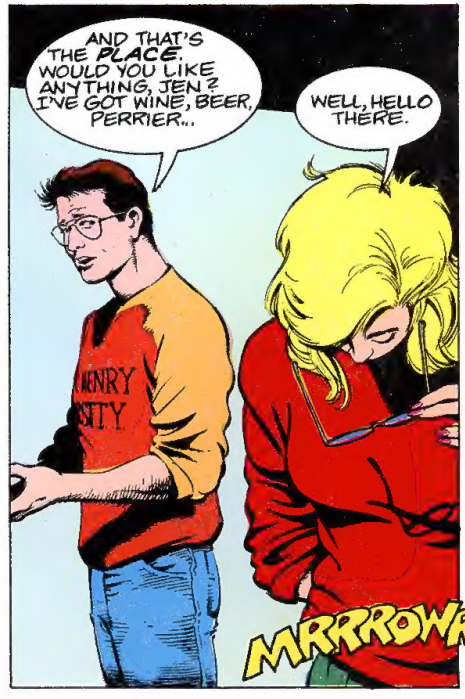
...NOW YOU CAN OPEN THEM!
GABE, THAT'S SO SWEET...!
I JUST WANT YOU TO FEEL WELCOME, BABE.
WELCOME,
PATRICK HENRY UNIVERSITY

"...HERE, LET ME SHOW YOU THE REST OF THE PLACE..."


DON'T TELL ME; THIS IS THE NERVE CENTER OF THE WEBB LITERARY EMPIRE...
YEP. AND BACK HERE'S THE KITCHEN...

...ALL THE REALLY GREAT CHEFS OF THE WORLD ARE MEN, YOU KNOW. I CAN'T WAIT TO COOK FOR YOU.
WE'LL SEE...


AND THIS WOULD BE THE BEDROOM... AND THAT WOULD BE THE BED...
YES, I RECOGNIZED IT RIGHT AWAY.


AND THAT'S THE PLACE. WOULD YOU LIKE ANYTHING, JEN? I'VE GOT WINE, BEER, PERRIER...
WELL, HELLO THERE.
MRRROWR?

OH, THAT'S MY ROOMMATE, RALPH THE WONDER CAT.
PATRICK HENRY UNIVERSITY
PPPURRRR
MY, YOU'RE THE HANDSOMEST THING, AREN'T YOU? YES, YOU ARE...
OH, DO YOU MIND IF I CALL THE OFFICE? I JUST WANT TO CHECK ON--
GABE...!
YOU'RE LIKE A MOTHER WITH A CHILD, YOU KNOW THAT? JEN, THE MAZE AGENCY IS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF RUNNING ITSELF FOR ONE WEEKEND...
...THIS WEEKEND IS FOR US, OKAY?
MY, I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS SIDE OF YOU BEFORE...
"...I RATHER LIKE IT..."
YOU'D BETTER STOP MAKING ALL THAT NOISE UP THERE
DAMN, IT--!

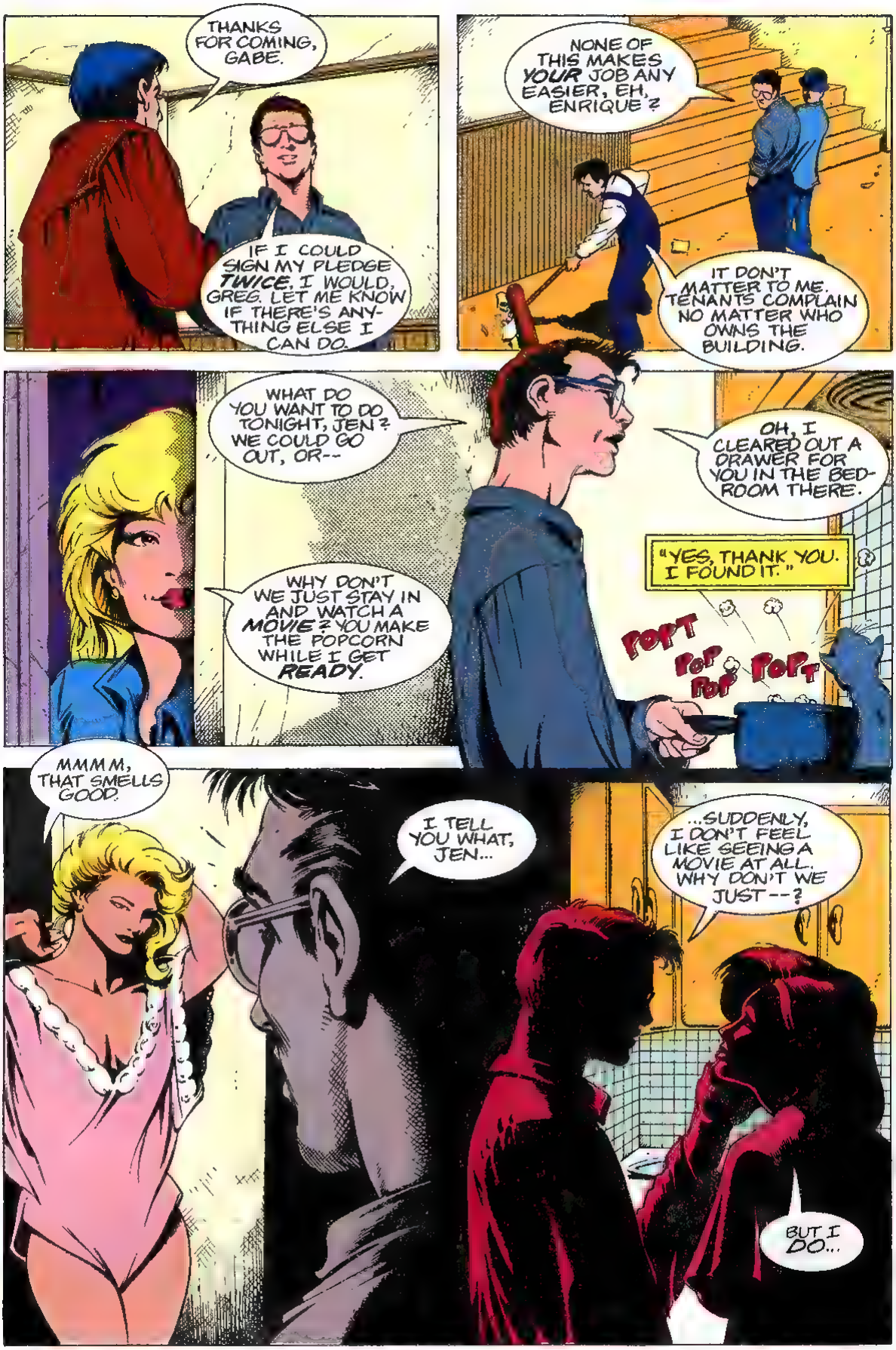
AND THAT MUST BE YOUR DOWNSTAIRS NEIGHBOR.
UNFORTUNATELY.
LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU OLD BAG!
THUMP THUMP
SHE'S NUTS! SHE SNOOPED AROUND, FOUND OUT I WAS A WRITER, AND TOLD THE LANDLORD I RAN A PRINTING PRESS UP HERE!
DON'T LET HER GET TO YOU, ACE...
...THIS WEEKEND IS FOR US, REMEMBER?
YEAH...
LOOK, HOW ABOUT IF WE HAVE SOME DINNER? I'LL COOK!
I... ER... COULDN'T PUT YOU TO ALL THAT TROUBLE, HONEY... WHY DON'T WE GO OUT, INSTEAD? IT'LL JUST TAKE ME A MINUTE TO GET CHANGED.
...YOU'LL LIKE THIS DINER I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU ABOUT. IT'S NOT AS RITZY AS THE BLUE RUBY, BUT--
I HAVE EASILY SATISFIED TASTES, MISTER-- I HANG AROUND WITH YOU, DON'T I?
SO, YOU'RE FINALLY GOING OUT, HUH? WHY DON'T YOU MOVE OUT, BEFORE I HAVE YOU EVICTED!

THAT'S YOUR DOWNSTAIRS NEIGHBOR?
THAT'S HER; MS. JAZMECKI, THE PRIDE OF APARTMENT 1G. JUST IGNORE HER!
I'M TALKING TO YOU, YOUNG MAN...!
...BUT I GUESS YOU'RE TOO BUSY WITH THAT HOOKER, EH?
NOW LISTEN, YOU OLD BITCH--!
IGNORE HER, HONEY, PLEASE...!
VASQUEZ? VASQUEZ!
WHERE'S VASQUEZ? WHERE'S THE SUPER-INTENDENT?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW WHERE THAT LAZY WETBACK IS? YOU HIRED HIM!
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP
WHAT DO YOU WANT? TODAY'S MY DAY OFF, YOU KNOW!
1E
VASQUEZ, I GOT COCKROACHES THE SIZE OF DOGS IN MY APARTMENT!
I WILL SPRAY AGAIN, MR. CONNORS! PLEASE, GET BACK INSIDE YOUR APARTMENT BEFORE YOUR ALARM WAKES UP MY KIDS!
SERVES YOU RIGHT, CONNORS!
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

HURRY IT UP, VASQUEZ! DON'T FORGET WHO SIGNS YOUR CHECKS!
"MY KIDS"! YOU GOT ABOUT NINETEEN ILLEGAL SPIC RELATIVES IN THERE, VASQUEZ! I'M GONNA CALL IMMIGRATION SOMEDAY!
BEEEEEEP
"...HE REFUSED TO MAKE ANY REPAIRS ON THE BUILDINGS HE OWNS, SO THE COURT SENTENCED HIM TO LIVE IN ONE FOR SIX MONTHS!
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
ENRIQUE VASQUEZ IS THE BUILDING SUPER IN 1E; HE'S FROM PUERTO RICO. JAZMECKI IS TOTALLY PARANOID ABOUT HIM -- ABOUT EVERYONE.
"THAT ELECTRONIC THING ON HIS ANKLE BEEPS UP A STORM IF HE LEAVES HIS APARTMENT, AND IT SIGNALS THE LOCAL POLICE!"
THE OTHER GUY IS HAROLD CONNORS FROM 1H -- HE'S THE LANDLORD, HEAD OF TRIANGLE BUILDING MANAGEMENT. MAYBE YOU READ ABOUT HIM...
TALK ABOUT "HOUSE ARREST." THIS IS QUITE A CIRCUS YOU LIVE IN, ACE.
TELL ME ABOUT IT...
...SURE YOU'RE NOT IN THE MARKET FOR A ROOMMATE?
NOT JUST YET.

NOW, WASN'T THAT BETTER THAN COOKING?
YOU'RE NOT GETTING OFF THAT EASILY! TOMMORROW, FOR BREAKFAST, I'M GOING TO--
HEY, WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE?
DID YOU FORGET ABOUT THE TENANTS' MEETING, MR. WEBB?
I GUESS I DID, MR. SHUPMEYER. LOOK, THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF RALPH WHILE I WAS GONE LAST WEEKEND.
ANYTIME. HE'S SUCH A NICE LITTLE KITTY...
HERSCHEL, SHHH! MR. EDWARDS IS SPEAKING...!
AS YOU ALL KNOW, MANHATTAN REALTY IS TRYING TO BUY THIS BUILDING AND TURN IT INTO CO-OPS TOO EXPENSIVE FOR ANY OF US TO LIVE IN!
BUT LEGALLY, THEY CAN'T JUST EVICT US. THEY HAVE TO GIVE US FIRST SHOT AT BUYING THEM, BEFORE THEY'RE OFFERED TO ANYONE ELSE!
US ARMY
WHO'S THAT? HE'S VERY HANDSOME..
THAT'S GREG EDWARDS, FROM 1F, ACROSS FROM JAZMECKI. HE MOVED IN A FEW MONTHS AGO, WHEN HE GOT OUT OF THE ARMY.
HE'S NOT THAT HANDSOME.
"SO WE ALL HAVE TO SIGN THESE PLEDGES, SAYING WE WON'T BUY OUR APARTMENTS! TELL MANHATTAN REALTY WE WANT THIS BUILDING TO STAY RENTAL UNITS, LIKE IT IS NOW!"

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BUYING? WE LIKE IT HERE, AND WE WANT TO OWN OUR APARTMENT!
IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT, THAT'S FINE, MR. MORGAN...
...BUT THOSE OF US WHO CAN'T--AND THAT'S MOST OF US--ARE GETTING OUR APARTMENTS SOLD OUT FROM UNDER US! AS SOON AS MANHATTAN REALTY HAS ANY EXCUSE AT ALL, THEY'LL EVICT US...
US ARMY
...UNLESS OVER FIFTY PERCENT OF US PLEDGE NOT TO BUY! AND RIGHT NOW, IT COULD GO EITHER WAY!
WE'VE GOT TO PULL TOGETHER, LIKE WE DID IN THE ARMY! ARE YOU WITH ME?
YAYYY
HOW ABOUT IT, MS. JAZMECKI? HAVE YOU SIGNED A--?
THEY CAN'T EVICT ME, I'M OVER SIXTY-FIVE! I'LL BE IN THAT APARTMENT UNTIL I DROP...
...BUT IF THEY GET RID OF ALL OF YOU, I WOULDN'T MIND IT A BIT!


THANKS FOR COMING, GABE.
IF I COULD SIGN MY PLEDGE TWICE, I WOULD, GREG. LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANY-THING ELSE I CAN DO.
NONE OF THIS MAKES YOUR JOB ANY EASIER, EH, ENRIQUE?
IT DON'T MATTER TO ME. TENANTS COMPLAIN NO MATTER WHO OWNS THE BUILDING.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TONIGHT, JEN? WE COULD GO OUT, OR--
WHY DON'T WE JUST STAY IN AND WATCH A MOVIE? YOU MAKE THE POPCORN WHILE I GET READY.
OH, I CLEARED OUT A DRAWER FOR YOU IN THE BED-ROOM THERE.
"YES, THANK YOU. I FOUND IT."
POP! POP POP POP!
MMMM, THAT SMELLS GOOD.
I TELL YOU WHAT, JEN...
...SUDDENLY, I DON'T FEEL LIKE SEEING A MOVIE AT ALL. WHY DON'T WE JUST--?
BUT I DO...

WELL, YOU'RE THE GUEST. LET'S SEE, WE'VE GOT STAR TREK II AND DIRTY HARRY, MURDER BY DECREE AND DEATH WISH...
I THINK I SEE A PATTERN FORMING. DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING MORE ROMANTIC...?
"CASABLANCA"?
THE WATERS? WHAT WATERS? WE'RE IN THE DESERT.
I WAS MISINFORMED.
...WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS.
HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID...
...BUT SOON, AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...

WHY DON'T WE STAY IN BED ALL DAY?
BECAUSE THEN I COULDN'T MAKE YOU BREAKFAST.
I KNOW.
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
IF THAT'S JAZMECKI AGAIN--!
GABE...!
I HAVE TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME ALONE, JAZMECKI--!
OH.
SGT. DOUGLAS, HOMICIDE. ARE YOU GABRIEL WEBB?
UH, YEAH--?
WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS, SIR. YOUR DOWNSTAIRS NEIGHBOR, A MS. JAZMECKI, WAS MURDERED LAST NIGHT.
HELLO, THE MAZE AGENCY? THIS IS MISS MAYS. PLEASE CONTACT MR. HARDESTY, OF HARDESTY AND HARDESTY, AT HIS HOME...

"MY LAWYER DOESN'T THINK YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO WORRY, GABE. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE THEY QUESTIONED..."
"YEAH, BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE THEY BROUGHT HERE!"
POLIC
HEAD
JACKSO
HEIGHT
WELL, ONCE HE'S TALKED TO LIEUTENANT BLISS AS A CHARACTER REFERENCE, I'M SURE SGT. DOUGLAS WILL--
IF HE TALKED TO BLISS, HE'LL THROW AWAY THE KEY!
HELLO, SERGEANT. MAY MR. WEBB GO NOW?
SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING, MISS MAYS. NO, I'M AFRAID NOT...
...NOT UNTIL MR. WEBB CAN EXPLAIN HOW HIS FINGERPRINTS GOT ON THE MURDER WEAPON!
FINGERPRINTS? MAY WE SEE IT?
I CAN SHOW YOU A PICTURE.
79-A
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT KNIFE! I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE ACCIDENTLY THROWN IT OUT WHEN I WAS CLEANING MY PLACE!
I THINK I THREW IT DOWN THE INCINERATOR WITH A BUNCH OF MAGAZINES WITH MY NAME ON THE ADDRESS LABELS! I'M BEING FRAMED!
IF SO, THE KILLER DIDN'T STOP THERE. THERE WAS NOTHING IN YOUR APARTMENT, BUT THE LAB FOUND TRACES OF JAZMECKI'S BLOOD ON YOUR DOOR.

SERGEANT, MR. WEBB IS A CRIME WRITER. HE WOULD SURELY KNOW BETTER THAN TO BE CARELESS WITH EVIDENCE.
THAT'S A POINT...
AS YOU KNOW, I'M A LICENSED PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. SURELY MR. WEBB COULD BE RELEASED IN MY CUSTODY FOR A FEW HOURS...
I DON'T KNOW...
THE SUPER FOUND THE BODY HERE IN THE BASEMENT THIS MORNING. BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF BLOOD, THEY THINK SHE WAS KILLED SOMEPLACE ELSE.
YEAH--MY APARTMENT.
THE AUTOPSY SHOWED SHE'D BEEN KNOCKED OUT AND KILLED SOMETIME DURING THE NIGHT.
HMMM, NONE OF THESE LIGHTS SEEM TO WORK.
LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS BUILDING.
THE KILLER GOT A BREAK THERE. BECAUSE THE INCINERATOR WASN'T WORKING, IT DIDN'T BURN YOUR FINGER-PRINTS OFF THAT KNIFE.
INCINERATOR
YEAH, BUT WHAT WAS HE DOING IN THE INCINERATOR ROOM, ANYWAY?

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#2 -- "Untouchabots" -- Lawrence/ Oldham ($2.00)
#3 -- "Shadowalker" -- Ron Lim cover ($2.00)

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#1 -- Horror anthology by Bolton, Mooney, Phillips, others. Anne Rice's *TheVampire Lestat* previewed! ($4.95)

BARNEY THE INVISIBLE TURTLE
#1 -- Not teenaged, or a mutant, or a ninja! ($2.00)

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BEAST WARRIORS OF SHAOLIN (Series)
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#2 -- Martial arts ($3.00)
#3 -- "New Breed" preview ($2.50)

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#2 -- The colorful adventure concludes ($1.95)
#1 -- Trade Pbk. ($6.95)

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#1 -- Children create Goldbergian gadgets ($2.00)

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#1 -- Randy at war. Visceral. Recommended! ($2.50)

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#1 -- Stunningly funny parody of the new *Batman* movie, by Mark Martin! ($2.25)

GNATRAT: THE DARK GNAT RETURNS
#1 -- By Mark Martin! First, original Dark Knight parody. Highly recommended. ($10.00)
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#1 -- Bo Hampton fantasy art at his best! ($5.00)
#2 -- Hampton/Statema art ($4.00)
#3 -- Hampton/Garzon art ($3.00)
#4 -- Hampton art and special backup ($3.00)
#5 -- Hampton art; Bart Sears cover! Limited distribution! ($3.00)

THE GROUP LARUE (Full Color)
#1 -- Mike Baron vs gamers; cover by the artists of *Stargrazers*! ($2.00)
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#1 -- Scarce! Baron, Campiti, Lim, Sears, Truman, more! ($5.00)

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#3 -- Ron Lim art ($2.50)
#4 -- Ripped costumes, "tease" cover. Ron Lim art ($2.25)
#5 -- The New Humans debut. Lim/Atkinson art ($2.00)
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#8 -- Bootleg issue! The first produced without authorization from the creators. Rare! ($5.00)
#1 -- Special Edition, new pages. Lim art. ($2.50)

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#1 -- Authorized 1st printing! Sizzling Ron Lim "good girl" art ($3.00)

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#1 -- Limited distribution! Ron Lim art ($3.00)
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#1 -- John (*Superman*) Statema art! ($1.75)
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the MAZE AGENCY®
LIEUTENANT BLISS -- THERE'S A BODY OVER HERE!
SORRY, LACEY-- THIS IS OUT OF MY JURISDICTION!
AND IT'S MY DAY OFF! IT'S UP TO YOU, JENNIFER, DARLING.
GAKK!
CK HENRY VERSITY
=SIGH= DON'T KILL YOURSELF PUTTING UP THAT BEACH CHAIR, GABE. WE'VE GOT A MURDER TO SOLVE!
HUGHES '89
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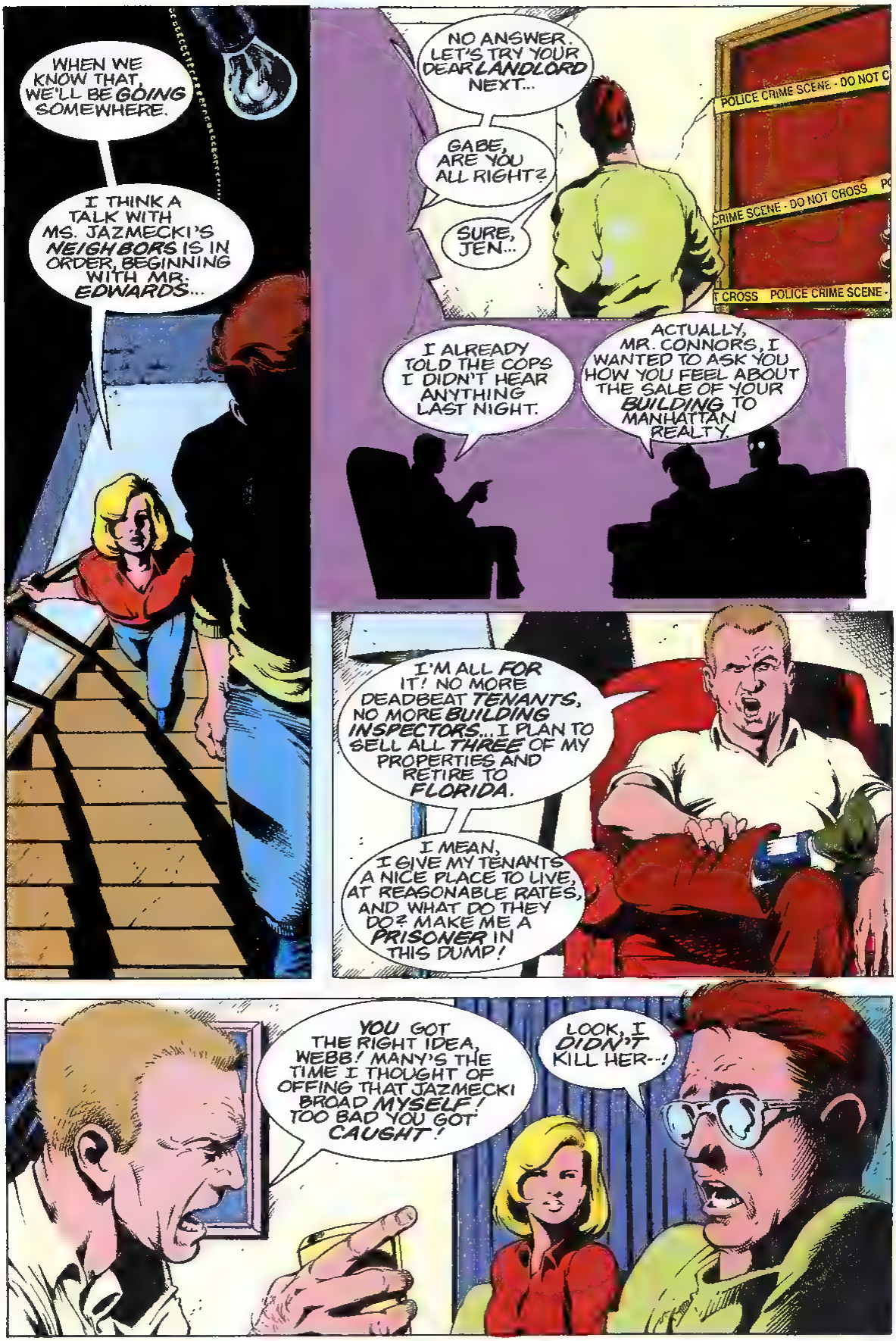
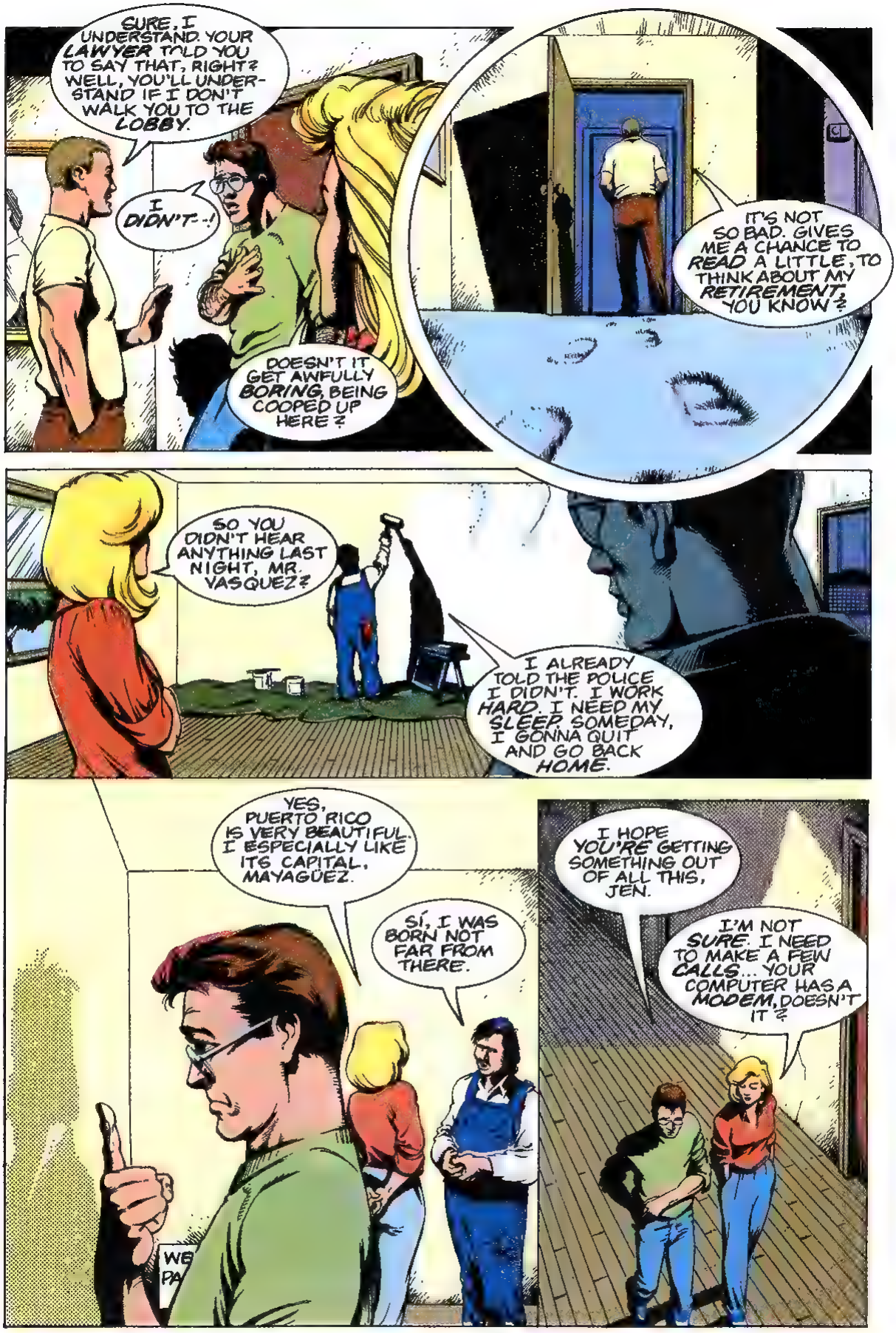
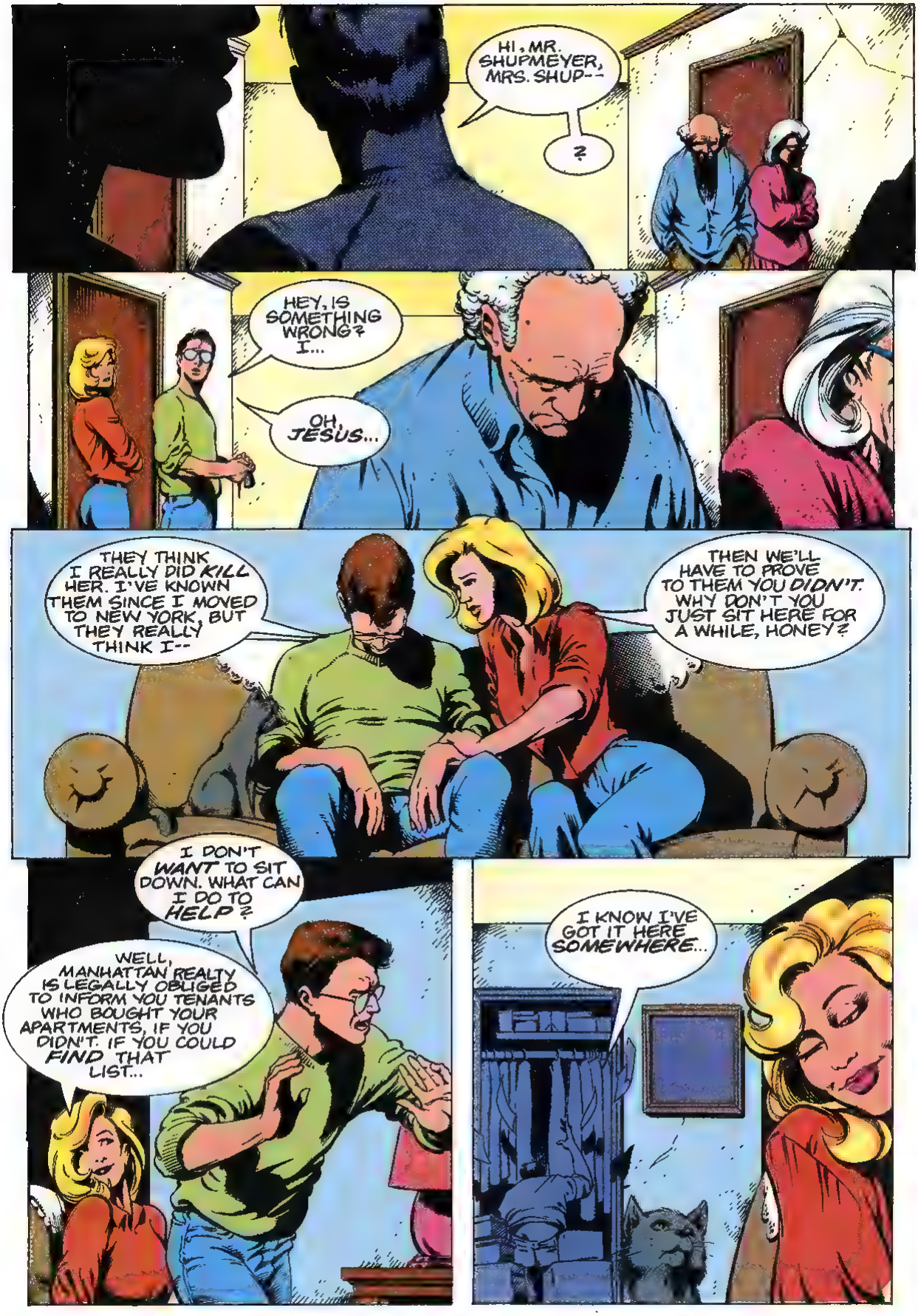
INNOVATION™


WHEN WE KNOW THAT, WE'LL BE GOING SOMEWHERE.
I THINK A TALK WITH MS. JAZMECKI'S NEIGHBORS IS IN ORDER, BEGINNING WITH MR. EDWARDS...
NO ANSWER. LET'S TRY YOUR DEAR LANDLORD NEXT...
GABE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SURE, JEN...
POLICE CRIME SCENE - DO NOT C
CRIME SCENE - DO NOT CROSS
T CROSS POLICE CRIME SCENE -
I ALREADY TOLD THE COPS I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING LAST NIGHT.
ACTUALLY, MR. CONNORS, I WANTED TO ASK YOU HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SALE OF YOUR BUILDING TO MANHATTAN REALTY.
I'M ALL FOR IT! NO MORE DEADBEAT TENANTS, NO MORE BUILDING INSPECTORS... I PLAN TO SELL ALL THREE OF MY PROPERTIES AND RETIRE TO FLORIDA.
I MEAN, I GIVE MY TENANTS A NICE PLACE TO LIVE, AT REASONABLE RATES, AND WHAT DO THEY DO? MAKE ME A PRISONER IN THIS DUMP!
YOU GOT THE RIGHT IDEA, WEBB! MANY'S THE TIME I THOUGHT OF OFFING THAT JAZMECKI BROAD MYSELF! TOO BAD YOU GOT CAUGHT!
LOOK, I DIDN'T KILL HER--!


SURE, I UNDERSTAND. YOUR LAWYER TOLD YOU TO SAY THAT, RIGHT? WELL, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I DON'T WALK YOU TO THE LOBBY.
I DIDN'T--!
DOESN'T IT GET AWFULLY BORING, BEING COOPED UP HERE?
IT'S NOT SO BAD. GIVES ME A CHANCE TO READ A LITTLE, TO THINK ABOUT MY RETIREMENT, YOU KNOW?
SO YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING LAST NIGHT, MR. VASQUEZ?
I ALREADY TOLD THE POLICE I DIDN'T. I WORK HARD. I NEED MY SLEEP. SOMEDAY, I GONNA QUIT AND GO BACK HOME.
YES, PUERTO RICO IS VERY BEAUTIFUL. I ESPECIALLY LIKE ITS CAPITAL, MAYAGÜEZ.
SÍ, I WAS BORN NOT FAR FROM THERE.
I HOPE YOU'RE GETTING SOMETHING OUT OF ALL THIS, JEN.
I'M NOT SURE. I NEED TO MAKE A FEW CALLS... YOUR COMPUTER HAS A MODEM, DOESN'T IT?

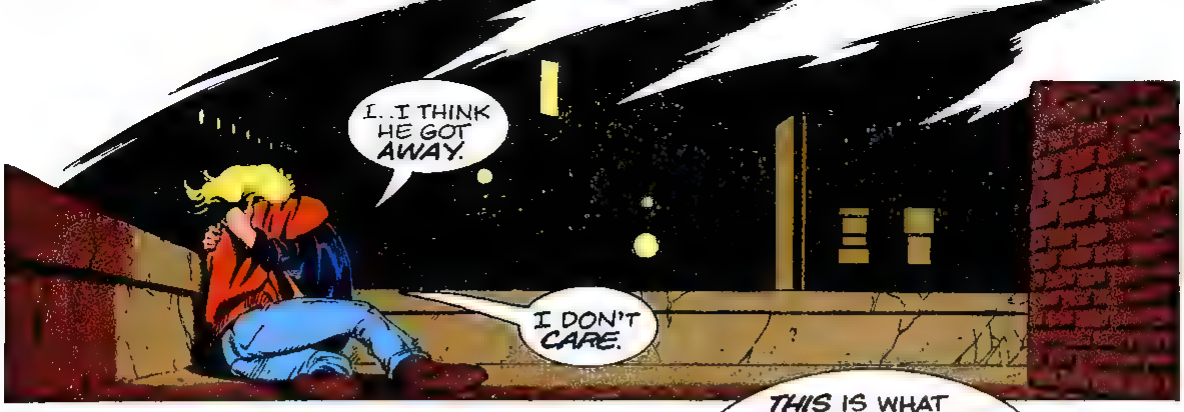

HI, MR. SHUPMEYER, MRS. SHUP--
?
HEY, IS SOMETHING WRONG? I...
OH, JESUS...
THEY THINK I REALLY DID KILL HER. I'VE KNOWN THEM SINCE I MOVED TO NEW YORK, BUT THEY REALLY THINK I--
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO PROVE TO THEM YOU DIDN'T. WHY DON'T YOU JUST SIT HERE FOR A WHILE, HONEY?
I DON'T WANT TO SIT DOWN. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?
WELL, MANHATTAN REALTY IS LEGALLY OBLIGED TO INFORM YOU TENANTS WHO BOUGHT YOUR APARTMENTS, IF YOU DIDN'T. IF YOU COULD FIND THAT LIST...
I KNOW I'VE GOT IT HERE SOMEWHERE...

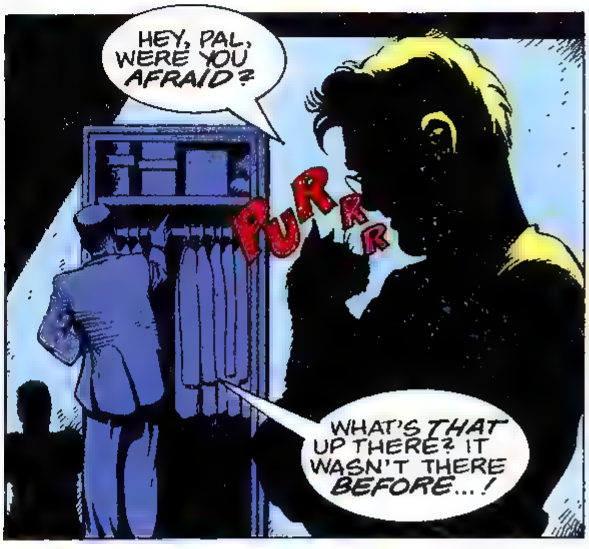
HOW DID YOU DIG THIS UP ON A SATURDAY?
CALLING IN FAVORS I'VE BEEN OWED FOR YEARS! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I KNOW IT'S NOT EVIDENCE, BUT--
SERGEANT, THERE'S A MR. EDWARDS HERE TO SEE YOU.
SEND HIM BACK, REESE. MISS MAYS, WHY DON'T YOU STEP OUTSIDE?
I WAS WONDERING HOW MUCH LONGER IT WOULD BE BEFORE YOU ARREST WEBB, SERGEANT. THE WHOLE BUILDING'S BEEN THROWN INTO A PANIC.
I'M NOT SURE, MR EDWARDS...
...YOU SEE, IT MAKES IT TOUGH FOR THE POLICE WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T STRAIGHT WITH US-- LIKE YOU.
WHAT--?
YOU KNOW, EDWARDS?
YOU'VE BEEN BUYING APARTMENTS IN YOUR BUILDING, INCLUDING MS. JAZMECKI'S...
...UNDER THE NAME OF A HOLDING COMPANY FUNDED BY MANHATTAN REALTY!
DONUTS
WELL... SO WHAT IF I HAVE?

"SO" YOU'VE BEEN TELLING US TENANTS YOU WERE ON OUR SIDE! BUT YOU'RE JUST A SPY FOR MANHATTAN REALTY!
THERE'S STILL NO LAW AGAINST IT!
ALL THAT "TECHNICAL TRAINING" I WAS PROMISED IN THE ARMY WAS BUNK! I HAD TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET ALONG!
YOU AND JUDAS ISCARIOT!
WITH JAZMECKI DEAD, YOU GET HER APARTMENT! THAT'LL SWING THE BALANCE OF OWNED APARTMENTS TO FIFTY PERCENT!
AND THE BUILDING WILL GO CO-OP! HER MURDER WAS A REAL BREAK, ALL RIGHT -- BUT I DIDN'T KILL HER!
HE MIGHT BE TELLING THE TRUTH, YOU KNOW...
YES...
...WE'LL HAVE TO COAX THE KILLER OUT OF HIDING -- AND I THINK I KNOW HOW.
DO YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO GO TO THE MOVIES, JEN?
SGT. DOUGLAS TOLD YOU NOT TO LEAVE THE CITY, GABE. LEAVING YOUR APARTMENT IS FINE, I'M SURE.

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'LL BE FUN TO SEE A DOUBLE FEATURE--- WE WON'T BE HOME FOR HOURS...
DO YOU THINK THEY HEARD ME IN THE APART-MENTS?
I THINK THEY HEARD YOU IN BANGLADESH! NOW, LET'S GO AROUND THE BLOCK...
ALL READY, SERGEANT?
WE'VE GOT THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING COVERED, MISS MAYS...
"...AND IF YOU LEFT YOUR WINDOWS UNLOCKED, WEBB, ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT, AND HOPE THE KILLER BITES!"
IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT. IF HE DOESN'T SHOW SOON...
I FORGOT ABOUT RALPH! IF HE GETS HURT--!
GABE, HUSH! LOOK...!
"THAT'S OUR MAN!"

WEBB, LET US HANDLE THIS!
HE DIDN'T TRY TO FRAME YOU!
UNNGGGH!
AGGGGGH
GABE--!
KRRRR
AKKT!

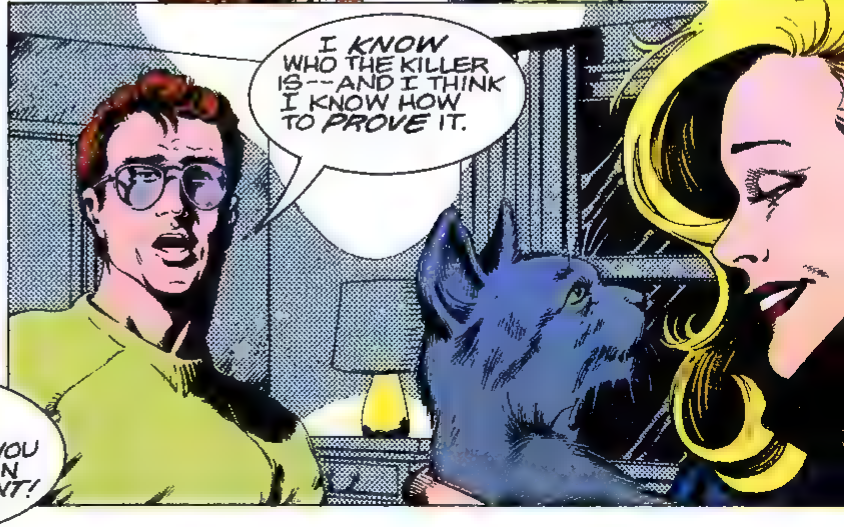

I..I THINK HE GOT AWAY.
I DON'T CARE.


HEY, PAL, WERE YOU AFRAID?
PURRR
WHAT'S THAT UP THERE? IT WASN'T THERE BEFORE...!

THIS IS WHAT HE PLANTED IN YOUR CLOSET, WEBB... I SUPPOSE FINGERPRINTS WILL BE TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR. GET A PICTURE OF IT BEFORE WE UNFOLD IT...

THIS DROP CLOTH WAS USED TO CONTAIN THE BLOOD AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE JAZMECKI WAS KILLED SOMEPLACE ELSE!
I BET SHE WAS KILLED RIGHT WHERE YOU FOUND HER, IN THE BASEMENT!

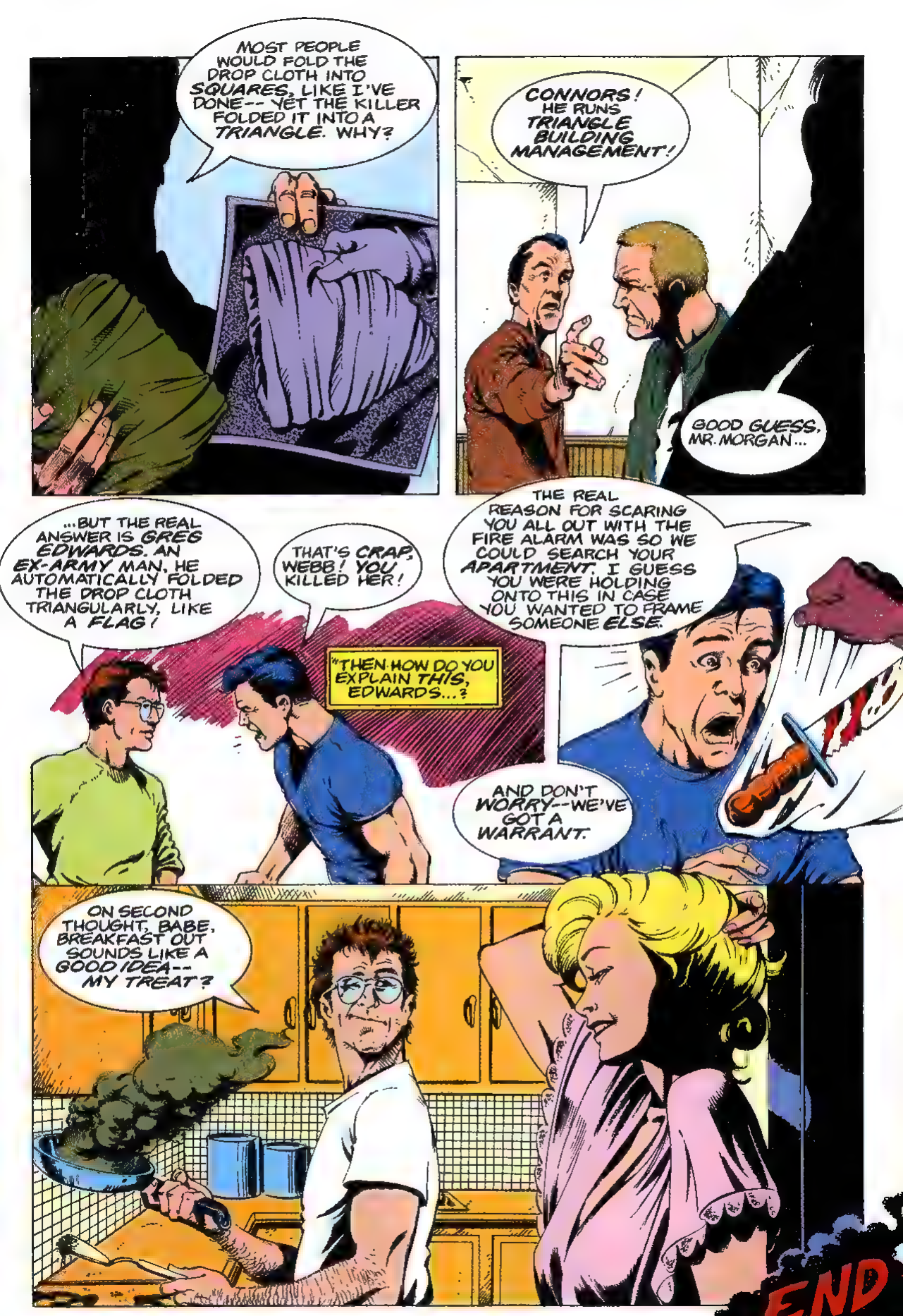
THAT TELLS US WHERE, BUT NOT WHO. TOO BAD THIS CAT CAN'T TALK.
HE DOESN'T NEED TO, SERGEANT.


I KNOW WHO THE KILLER IS--AND I THINK I KNOW HOW TO PROVE IT.

BAM BAM BAM
HOLD YOUR HORSES--!
WHAT THE HELL, LADY? I WAS SLEEPING...
AND HAVE BEEN FOR HOURS, I SUPPOSE, MR. CONNORS? TOO BAD YOU CAN'T PROVE THAT!
I CAN PROVE I DIDN'T LEAVE.
BECAUSE OF THE ELECTRONIC WATCHDOG ON YOUR ANKLE? I THINK NOT.
HEY, GET AWAY FROM THERE...!
...I MADE SURE THEY STRAPPED THE BEEPER TO MY RIGHT LEG, OVER A SOCK.
I THOUGHT SO WHEN I SAW YOUR FOOTPRINTS IN THE CARPET--THE RIGHT WAS HEAVIER THAN THE LEFT! YOUR MILITARY RECORDS SHOWED YOU LOST A FOOT IN KOREA...
YEAH, BUT THE COURT NEVER KNEW...
"MAYBE MS. JAZMECKI SAW YOU OUT ONE NIGHT, AND YOU KILLED HER TO KEEP YOUR SECRET."

I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU PROVE-- HUH?
IT'S JUST THE SMOKE ALARM, MR. CONNORS... BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON IN DANGER!
SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEE
"IF YOU'RE ASKING 'WHERE'S THE FIRE?', THE ANSWER IS NOWHERE...
THIS WAS A JOKE? IT'S GONNA TAKE ME HOURS TO GET MY KIDS BACK TO SLEEP!
AND YOUR RELATIVES, ENRIQUE? THE ONES JAZMECKI CLAIMED WERE HERE ILLEGALLY?
...BUT I WANTED TO GET YOUR ATTENTION-- AND SINCE YOU ALL THINK I'M A KILLER, YOUR OPINIONS CAN'T GET ANY WORSE.
YOU'D BETTER GET GOING, SERGEANT.
SHE WAS LOCO! WE'RE ALL NATIVES OF PUERTO RICO-- ALL U.S. CITIZENS!
IS THAT SO, MR. VASQUEZ...?
SCREEEE
RIGHT.
A NATIVE PUERTO RICAN WOULD KNOW THAT SAN JUAN IS THE CAPITAL, NOT MAYAGÜEZ-- BUT YOU DIDN'T.
YOU'RE MEXICAN, AREN'T YOU? IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO CHECK.
JAZMECKI WAS ALWAYS SNOOPING... SHE MUST HAVE OVERHEARD US... SHE THREATENED TO TELL...

WHOEVER KILLED HER LAST NIGHT FIRST KNOCKED HER OUT, DRAGGED HER DOWNSTAIRS, THEN KILLED HER ON THIS DROP CLOTH!
BUT ANYONE MIGHT'VE STOLEN ONE OF THESE, MRS. SHUPMEYER--THESE THREE, OR ME, OR ANY OF YOU.
I THINK THE KILLER'S ORIGINAL GOAL WAS TO USE THE DROP CLOTH ONLY TO CONFUSE THE POLICE AS TO THE SITE OF THE MURDER...
GASP! ENRIQUE USED A DROP CLOTH LIKE THAT WHEN HE PAINTED OUR APARTMENT!
...AND HE INTENDED TO JUST BURN THE DROP CLOTH IN THE INCINERATOR. BUT HE CHANGED HIS PLAN, BECAUSE THE INCINERATOR WAS BROKEN, AND BECAUSE HE FOUND MY KNIFE THERE.
HE DECIDED TO SAVE THE DROP CLOTH, TO USE AS FURTHER PROOF AGAINST ME IF I WASN'T ARRESTED ON THE EVIDENCE OF THE KNIFE. WORKING QUICKLY, HE FOLDED THE DROP CLOTH AND TOOK IT WITH HIM.
THAT'S IMPORTANT. WORKING UNDER PRESSURE, WITH NO LIGHT OTHER THAN HIS FLASHLIGHT, FEARING DISCOVERY, A MAN WILL DO WHATEVER TASK NEEDS DOING BY THE METHOD HE'S MOST FAMILIAR WITH.


MOST PEOPLE WOULD FOLD THE DROP CLOTH INTO SQUARES, LIKE I'VE DONE-- YET THE KILLER FOLDED IT INTO A TRIANGLE. WHY?
CONNORS! HE RUNS TRIANGLE BUILDING MANAGEMENT!
GOOD GUESS, MR. MORGAN...
...BUT THE REAL ANSWER IS GREG EDWARDS. AN EX-ARMY MAN. HE AUTOMATICALLY FOLDED THE DROP CLOTH TRIANGULARLY, LIKE A FLAG!
THAT'S CRAP, WEBB! YOU KILLED HER!
"THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS, EDWARDS...?
THE REAL REASON FOR SCARING YOU ALL OUT WITH THE FIRE ALARM WAS SO WE COULD SEARCH YOUR APARTMENT. I GUESS YOU WERE HOLDING ONTO THIS IN CASE YOU WANTED TO FRAME SOMEONE ELSE.
AND DON'T WORRY--WE'VE GOT A WARRANT.
ON SECOND THOUGHT, BABE, BREAKFAST OUT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA-- MY TREAT?
END

AS I WAS SAYING BEFORE I WAS SO RUDELY INTERRUPTED...

To those old-timers who followed ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** *at our first publisher, Comico, thanks for waiting. To all you new readers, thanks for picking us up.* ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** *is virtually unique in the comics field, in that it features not super-heroes but detectives who have no super-powers but their wits -- and, in the case of private eye Jennifer Mays, an occasional Police Positive .38.*

If you're familiar with a somewhat more hardboiled private eye title, Ms. Tree *(and you ought to be),* ***MAZE*** *walks the opposite side of the street, leaning more toward whodunits in the tradition of Ellery Queen and Agatha Christie. I am proud to announce that* ***MAZE*** *was nominated as "Best New Series" for both the Harvey [Kurtzman] and Eisner Awards of 1988.*

Our creative staff remains pretty much the same -- ***Adam Hughes*** *and* ***Rick Magyar*** *are the artists and* ***Deborah Marks*** *is the letterer -- but* ***Kevin*** *and* ***Carol VanHook*** *have signed on as colorists, replacing colorist emeritus* ***Julia Lacquement****. Best of luck, Julia. Yours truly is the writer/creator, who is tickled pink to have* ***MAZE*** *back, when it looked as though all the forces of darkness were against us. Thanks, Dave.*

As always, we still want your mail, at the above address. Here comes some now...!

-- Mike W. Barr

Dear Michael (Mike Eury, editor emeritus) --

Even after five exciting, enthralling, action-packed, mystery-filled...oh, heck, just plain good issues, I am still excited about this book.

Issue #5, "Death Warmed Over," was one of the better issues of this book. The one thing that really appeals to me about *MAZE* is the accuracy of the subject matter.

Most writers would talk about the aspects of cryogenics that they have seen in magazine articles. But no, Mike has to go and do a fair amount of research so he comes across with an accurate, articulate masterpiece of scripting. By the way, I figured out who the killer was. As with all of the stories, the conclusions on the part of our heroes is logical and well thought out.

Can't wait to see when Mike makes the relationship between Jen and Gabe heat up.

The artwork by Adam Hughes and guest inker Al Vey was just as good as previous issues. As always, Hughes's pencils really make the book one of the best on the market. His women are beautiful and the expressions, movements, and detail in the rest of the book are just great. I especially liked the inserts on the middle panels of page 14. Very funny and expressive.

Well, see you next issue and keep up the great work.

Galen S. West
Ponderosa Hall #23a
Fresno State U.
Fresno, CA 93710-8236

Glad you solved #5, Galen. Like my "ideel" (as Fearless Fosdick would say) Ellery Queen, I believe in playing fair with the reader, giving him an equal chance to solve the mystery with Jen and Gabe. Congratulations.

--MWB

Dear Editor:

Congratulate me!

I solved my first *MAZE AGENCY* comic, #6 ("Double Edge"). I was beginning to think it was hopeless.

Liz Hunter

...On the other hand, maybe these mysteries are too darn easy to solve. (Actually, Liz's letter is printed here because some readers felt that #6 -- a locked room mystery -- was too complicated to solve. Thanks for balancing the scale, Liz.)

Now for more on #6...

--MWB

Dear Mikes,

I do like happy endings, and after the many less happy moments of "Double Edge," the last page was a delight, certainly for Gabe and Jennifer.

For this couple, business and pleasure should be able to mix perfectly. They also have the right blend of seriousness and jocularity, maturity and childlikeness, as well as plenty of self-confidence, hidden or otherwise. In many ways they're opposites, but complementary ones, and even after just half-a-dozen issues, I'm pleased for them.

Jenny chose the perfect birthday present for Gabe. She knew just what he would like and engineered it, to the best of her ability. True, things didn't go to plan, but there

wouldn't have been an issue of *MAZE* otherwise. *(There might have been an issue, but it would have been a darn short one! --MWB)*

At least Gabe and Jennifer once again solved the crime, and put another one over on Ashley Swift.

In fact, I wonder just how Ms. Swift manages to solve anything at all? From what I we've seen of her so far, she appears incapable of plying her trade with even a modicum of intelligence.

I also wonder whether the *MAZE* couple will always get it right? What would happen if they failed to solve a murder? There'd be nothing wrong with that, but it would be interesting to see them confronted by such a failure -- it would also be a test of their relationship, professionally and privately.

By the way, we know Jenny has a painful past in terms of romance, but what about Gabe?

For the most part, I enjoyed the version of our cast by guest artists Joe Staton and Rich Rankin. We see too little of Joe's work nowadays, and he has adapted to the style of this comic very well. He really is a master storyteller, yet used some nicely unusual layouts and techniques at times.

Finally, I've heard *MAZE* has found a new home at Innovation, and if that is true, than I'm very happy. This is far too good a book to go to that great publishing company in the sky, even temporarily, and I look forward to continuing to follow Jenny, Gabe and Co. over there. Take care.

Malcolm Bourne
6 Craigwell Rd Prestwich
Manchester M25 8EF England

I figure Ashley Swift is a lot like District Attorney Hamilton Burger in the Perry Mason *series. He always loses against Mason, but he probably has one hell of a conviction record against other attorneys. Likewise, Ashley Swift is probably a good detective, she's just not as good as Jen.*

--MWB

***NEXT ISSUE** (and boy, does it feel good to write that!):*

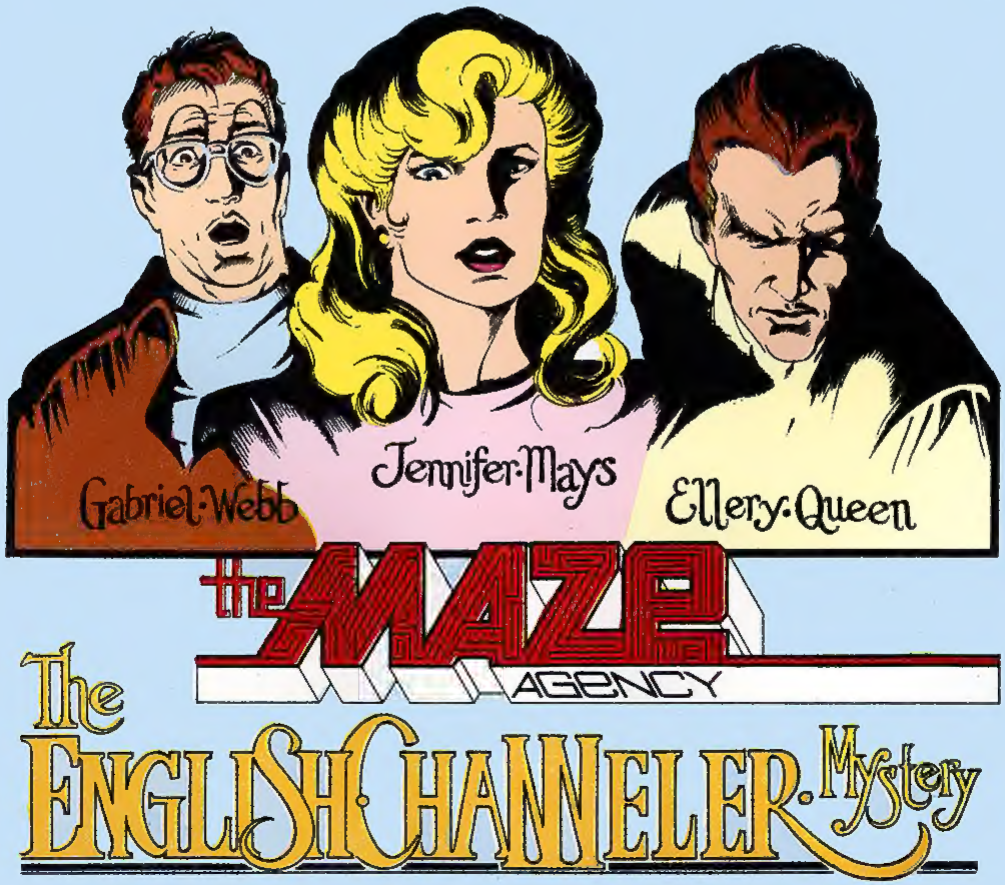
This is the big one, troops! Jen and Gabe join forces with **Ellery Queen** *to solve the mystery of a new age killer who moves across sand without a trace, who kills without a clue... and who has been dead for ten thousand years!*

"The English Channeler Mystery" commemorates the 60th anniversary of the creation of Ellery Queen by presenting the first new E.Q. story in fourteen years!

It's my favorite story of all I've written, with the best art yet by **Adam Hughes** *and* **Rick Magyar!** *It's* ***THE MAZE AGENCY #9****, on sale in thirty days!*

Be *here, it'll be* good!

-- MWB
August 1989



INNOVATION™

CELEBRATING THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF ELLERY QUEEN

Anyone with even a nodding acquaintance with the mystery genre has heard of Ellery Queen. He's written a series of novels and short stories; had an NBC TV-movie and weekly series; and still is cover-named for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*.

Now, by special arrangement with the estates of Fredric Dannay and Manfred B. Lee, Mike Barr brings to full-color comics life the world's only MAZE Agency/Ellery Queen team-up! Jennifer Mays and Gabe Webb join forces with the famous sleuth to stalk a killer who moves across sand without a clue -- and who has been dead for ten thousand years!

"Jennifer Mays and Gabriel Webb are an attractive pair of sleuths and the comic artwork is first - rate. The stories have the sort of ingenious puzzle plots that bring to mind a modernized version of Ellery Queen and John Dickson Carr at their best."
Edward D. Hoch

"Fascinating. I haven't picked up a comic book in years, but I don't remember them being this well drawn, well thought out -- and literate."
Peter S. Fisher,
Executive Producer of *Murder She Wrote*.

TM & © 1989 Ellery Queen
® & © 1989 Mike W. Barr

Says Mike Barr, "The stories of Ellery Queen are *why* I'm a writer -- and having Gabe and Jenn meet him is the next best thing to meeting him myself." ***THE MAZE AGENCY #9*** is written by Mike W. Barr -- and illustrated by Adam Hughes and Rick Magyar!

Next Issue:
"The English Channeler Mystery"

MAZE AGENCY #9
On Sale In October

By
MIKE W. BARR
ADAM HUGHES
RICK MAGYAR

#8/Full Color

$1.95 U.S.
$2.50 Can.

Meet New York's prettiest detective, *Jennifer Mays* of The Maze Agency, and true crime writer *Gabriel Webb*. Join them in this, their best fair-play whodunit yet, challenging the reader to solve the mystery as it unfolds!

THIS ISSUE: In "A New Lease On Death," Gabe Webb and Jennifer Mays plan to spend a lovely, quiet weekend at Gabe's place, getting caught up on some personal time. But their professional services are needed when the tenants' rent strike turns violent. Gabe's downstairs neighbor is murdered -- and *Gabe* is framed for the crime!

The 1989
Harvey and Eisner
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